

*Originals & answers*

A PAPER  
UPON  
CALIFORNIA;

READ BEFORE  
The Maryland Historical Society,

BY  
J. MORRISON HARRIS,

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY.

March, 1849.



BALTIMORE:  
PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY BY JOHN D. TOY,  
Corner of Market and St. Paul Streets.

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## CALIFORNIA.

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THE general interest which is felt in regard to this recently acquired territory, the dazzling accounts of its mineral wealth, the stream of emigration pouring into it, and the boundless field which it offers to the commercial enterprise of our age, combine to make California an important subject of investigation. The elements of greatness which are found within its borders, enforce the conviction that in a short time this remarkable country is destined to attain pre-eminence among the commercial emporiums of the world. It is a Hercules even in the cradle; and while other nations through well defined stages of progress rise slowly into power and significance, this ocean-colony, like the vapour which the Arabian fisherman freed from the magic casket, will swell at once into form and grandeur. To the Christian, who recognises, in all the events of time, the presence and wisdom of God, there is much in connection with its development, which seems to mark it as a distinct link in the chain of providential interference.

This interesting country lies upon the edge of that great ocean whose depths are filled with wealth, and whose countless islands offer in their abundant drugs and spices almost inexhaustible inducements to profitable commerce. Its climate is salubrious and delightful, its soil is singularly fertile, its rivers navigable, and its harbors capacious and secure. It is within easy reach of eastern Asia, and is filling up with a hardy and energetic population of Anglo-Saxons, whose feet press for the first time the sands of the Pacific, and who will soon develop those resources of wealth and power which have so long tempted the enterprise of the past. Bound by the affinities of homogeneous population,

political union, and common interest to this Republic,—with the iron pathways of trade extending, as they soon will, from ocean to ocean through our own territory, and the long line of the magnetic wire thrilling with communicated thought,—it will grow into a great central station between Europe and Asia, and powerfully influence the interests and institutions of the Old World, while at the same time, it expands the resources and builds up the greatness of our own country.

It is not my design to review fully the history of California from the period of its earliest settlement, but only to embody such facts as are essential to the connection of this narrative, and tend to explain points which it may be necessary briefly to discuss.

The country known under the name of California, stretches upon the Eastern edge of the Pacific Ocean, from the parallel of  $22^{\circ} 48'$  to the 42d degree of North latitude, and is divided into upper and lower California. OLD or LOWER CALIFORNIA is the name applied to the Peninsula which trends to the South-East, between the Pacific Ocean and the Gulf of California, to the 22d parallel.

It was discovered in the year 1534 by one of the captains of Cortéz, and for the succeeding century and a half occupied largely the attention of the Government of New Spain.\* Numerous expeditions were sent out both by the Vice Royal Government and by private individuals, for the purpose of exploration and settlement; and the current reports of the wealth of the country in gold and pearls kept the spirit of adventure alive up to the year 1683, when the Government, believing the settlement of the country to be impracticable, determined that no further attempts should be made at the public cost. The expeditions resulted unfavorably in almost every case. The navigation was hazardous,—the coast of the Peninsula which the discoverers skirted, was barren and desolate. Much difficulty was experienced in obtaining food, and some of the native tribes manifested a hostile spirit. Under such circumstances, the settlement of the country would probably have been long postponed, had not other influences brought to its accomplishment a few devoted men, whose labors have invested the early history of California with a peculiar interest.†

In all the important enterprises of that adventurous age, religion went hand in hand with discovery; and when in this instance the secular power shrank from the difficulties connected with the settle-

\* Forbes's California, p. 7.

† Forbes. Vanegas.

ment of California, the missionary priesthood of the Catholic church entered upon the field, and accomplished the *spiritual conquest* of the country.

The undertaking was a formidable one. Numerous expeditions, backed by the power of the Government, or sustained by individual wealth, had attempted it during a century without success; and we cannot withhold our astonishment and admiration, when we find that a few priests, almost destitute of resources, and strong only in faith, encountered all the difficulties incident to the undertaking, and finally achieved the settlement of the country. The success of this enterprise was chiefly owing to the labors of Fathers Kino and Salvatierra, who were worthy followers of Loyola; and those who wish to appreciate the life of the Catholic missionary, will find the record of their labors in California an interesting history of privation and danger.\*

They obtained a foothold in the country with great difficulty. By undeviating kindness, they slowly overcame the hostile feeling which the conduct of previous adventurers had excited, and were enabled to establish mission houses in different parts of the Peninsula, each of which became the nucleus of a settlement. At these establishments they concentrated as large an Indian population as possible, and by ingenious artifices and constant kindness, induced them to assist in the cultivation of the land, while, at the same time, they instructed them in the first principles of Christianity. One of the greatest difficulties which they had to contend with was the invincible sloth of the natives, and the establishment of a mission was a task of slow and laborious accomplishment.

After the selection of a suitable location, the priests by gentle treatment and liberal presents, gained the good will of the Indians. During this interval, their lodging was in the open air, or under a rude hut of *mesquit* branches. The next step in the progress of civilization was the erection of small houses of *adobies* or sun-baked bricks; and finally the chapel and numerous outbuildings of the mission were constructed. In the labor of these erections, the Fathers themselves participated largely. Their first assistants were the Indian boys, whose aid they secured by donations of sweetmeats or by innocent wagers, as to who could destroy most *mesquit* bushes, carry away most earth, or mould the largest number of *adobies*, in a given time. Thus by degrees the Indians were slowly humanised, the religious establishments became numerous and thriving, the power of the Fathers was

\* Vanegas.

consolidated, and the spiritual conquest of Lower California was accomplished.\*

Apart however from the partial conversion of the Indians, these severe labors had no very important results. The country proved to be unattractive and barren. Seven or eight hundred miles in length, and varying from thirty to a hundred miles in breadth, it was found to consist of broken groups of bare rocks, with tracts of sandy soil, interspersed with narrow strips of cultivable land. There were only two or three streams in the whole country, and springs of good water were very rare. The only wealth of the peninsula was in minerals and pearls, and the policy of the Fathers forbade the development of these resources, fearing that they would attract a class of population which would have thwarted their plans for the conversion of the natives. The severe restrictions which they imposed with the approbation of the Government of New Spain, account for the long interval which has elapsed before the greater attractions and singular wealth of the main land were opened to enterprise. Through the arteries of an encouraged commerce alone, beats the great heart of national progress. The pearls of the gulf, and the quicksilver and gold of the Peninsula, would have led Trade with her thousand energies, into the valley of the Sacramento centuries ago, and made the treasures of the El Dorado a tale of the past, instead of a marvel of the present.

NEW or ALTA CALIFORNIA was discovered about 1542, by Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, who explored the coast as far north as the 43d degree. Portions of the coast were visited by Sir Francis Drake in 1578; by Francisco Galli in 1582, and by Sebastian Vescayna in 1603. Vescayna discovered the ports of San Diego and Monterey, and closed the career of northern exploration which had originated with Cortéz.† In 1767, the Jesuits, by whom the settlement of Lower California had been accomplished, fell under the displeasure of the Government of Spain, and were expelled from the Peninsula.‡ The Marqués de Croix, who was at that time viceroy of New Spain, replaced them by the rival order of the Franciscans, upon whom he strongly urged the *spiritual conquest* of the Upper Province. This enterprise the Government considered more important than the settlement of the peninsula. The accounts which were current of the wealth of the country were very flattering, and political reasons induced them to lend efficient assistance to the

\* Vanegas. Forbes's California, p. 33.

† Forbes's California, 79, 80.

‡ Greenhow's Oregon and California, p. 106.

adventure. Both France and England at that time evinced considerable interest in the islands of the Pacific, and the countries upon its coast; and the explorations of Bourgainville and Cook, had begun to excite alarm. Russia also, with noiseless, but certain advance, was stretching her gigantic empire along the western coast, and Spain recognised the necessity of preventing these dangerous intruders from obtaining a foothold in her American possessions.\*

Under these circumstances, the spiritual subjugation of Upper California was accomplished in a comparatively short time. The same career of privation and toil was run by the priestly pioneers as marked the settlement of the Peninsula, but the missions grew up more rapidly, and the difficulties were, on the whole, fewer. The results were equally unimportant. Neither Mexico nor the colony was much benefited. The country offered great inducements to a profitable trade, and was believed to possess large deposits of quicksilver and gold; but the narrow and unwise policy of Mexico, both when an appendage of Spain, and an independent State, rendered the development of its resources impossible. The Government fettered commerce. It imposed restrictions instead of granting facilities; levied onerous taxes, and stretched a barrier of custom houses across ports which a liberal policy would have crowded with profitable trade. The interests of the country were wholly disregarded; and California became a refuge for invalid soldiers, indolent priests, and pampered officials.†

The missions, however, aided by large donations from the pious in Mexico, which were consolidated into what was styled "the California Pious Fund," rapidly grew in importance. They brought the mass of the native population into a condition of comparative vassalage, and gradually absorbed the valuable lands, almost to the exclusion of the white settlers. They existed in a state of almost total independence of Mexico; and although ordinary government establishments were kept up, as in the other provinces of the Vice Royalty, the priests were virtually the owners of the soil, and the masters of the country. Affairs remained in this position until the occurrence of the Mexican revolution in 1824. The Californias were then erected into territories, not having sufficient population to entitle them to be federative States, and were each allowed to send one member to the general Congress, who was privileged to take part in the debates of that body, but had no voice in

\* Greenhow's *Oregon and California*, pp. 104, 105. † Forbes, 289. Revere, 29

its decisions. As territories, they were under the government of an agent styled the Commandant General, whose powers were very extensive.\*

In the year 1827, the changes which had occurred in affairs in Mexico in consequence of the revolution of 1824, began to affect Upper California, and measures were adopted by the Government which opened the country to the influence of progress. The most serious of these was the secularization of the missions. As this mission system is the most important feature in the history of California, it is necessary to understand its character and operations. The spiritual conquerors of Upper California obtained a foothold in the country in 1769, and between that period and 1835, twenty-one missions were established. The missionaries having, by the settlement of the country, carried out the policy of the Government of New Spain, they were left to accomplish the task of converting the native population, which was their great object, unmolested by the Government, for more than half a century. With the first monks who went into the country, small detachments of soldiers were sent as guards, but as the establishments became important, the country was divided into four military districts, the head-quarters of which were termed Presidences or Presidios. The buildings at these consisted of quarters for the troops, a house for the commandant, a church, and warehouses. At a short distance was erected a fort, and to each Presidio was assigned two hundred and fifty mounted soldiers. These soldiers, the refuse of the army, were mostly deserters, mutineers and felons. The garrisons were intended for the protection of the missions, and the chief occupation of the troops was to recapture absconding converts. Connected with each Presidio were "Ranchos," or national farms, which were set apart for the use and support of the soldiers. After a certain term, the troops became exempted from further service, and grants of land were given to such as desired to settle in the country. This class founded three free "Pueblos" or Towns: Los Angeles, San José and Branciforte. So jealous were the missionaries of intrusion, that no grants of land could be obtained without their assent, which was given only to their own adherents; and as the soldiers were not allowed to marry, except by special permission, the free settlers were small in number. In 1835, the whole population of white and mixed castes in these towns, exclusive of Indians bound to the missions, did not exceed five thousand.

\* Forbes, 132, 133.

The mission establishments to which both the Presidios and Pueblos were subsidiary, were all formed on the same plan, and varied only in their extent, standing and population. Each mission was governed by a Friar, styled the prefect, who corresponded with the Government at Mexico, and ruled with absolute power over all the concerns of the establishment. The tillage of the ground, the gathering of the harvest, the slaughtering of the cattle, the weaving, and the spiritual and physical interests of the resident Indians were all directed by him. To each mission, a tract of about fifteen acres of land was originally allotted, but they gradually extended their boundaries from one establishment to another, and absorbed nearly all the valuable land on the coast. The edifices consisted of houses for the priests, storehouses, the dwellings of the Indians, and a church. The wealth of a mission depended largely upon its converted Indians, whose condition was little better than absolute slavery; and the number of these was increased by persuasion, purchase, and in some cases, force. Their religious education was attended to, they were clothed and fed, instructed in some useful arts, and performed all the labor of these extensive establishments. On the whole, it may be supposed that they were benefited by the working of the system. In 1832, the whole native population connected with the missions amounted to eighteen thousand six hundred and eighty-three. It, however, was not equally distributed. The mission of San Luis Rey possessed at that period three thousand dependant Indians. The number of domesticated animals belonging to this establishment exceeded sixty thousand, and its domain yielded annually about thirteen thousand bushels of grain.\*

From these details, an opinion may be formed of the character and importance of the mission system. It concentrated power and wealth in the hands of a small body of monks, and while this power was doubtless sometimes abused, all the writers upon California bear concurrent testimony to the eminent zeal, virtuous conduct, self-denial, and kindness of these missionary rulers.

A spirit of opposition to the missions had long been gathering strength in Mexico, and in 1833, under the administration of Gomez Farias, an act passed the Mexican Congress, decreeing their secularization. This was followed by other acts, suspending the salaries of the monks,

\* Greenhow's Oregon and California, p. 113. Thornton's Oregon and California, p. 92. Forbes's California, pp. 201 to 228. Bryant's California, 279 to 286. Robinson's Life in California, 1846, pp. 24, 33.

directing them to liberate the Indians from their servitude to the mission establishments, and to provide them with districts of land for their maintenance. The "Pious Fund" was confiscated; the removal of the missionaries, and the division of their property among the Indians and settlers was decreed, and an extensive plan adopted for the settlement of the country by emigration.

With these measures the history of the missions closes. They were deserted and speedily decayed;—and now, dilapidated walls and neglected fields alone bear witness to their former importance and extent.

In the year 1845 the population of Upper California amounted to about ten thousand, exclusive of Indians.\* Of this number two thousand were Americans, and it became evident to the more intelligent Californians that the increase of this class of population placed in jeopardy the government and institutions of the country. This apprehension led to the adoption of measures which hastened the event they dreaded. The revolution of 1845, headed by Don José Castro, Alvarado, Pio Pico and others, and in which the foreigners in California participated, resulted in the deposition of the Mexican governor, General Micheltorena; and the assumption of the gubernatorial functions by Pio Pico; and of the military command by General Castro.

General Castro at once adopted a policy highly offensive to the foreign population. Among other acts was the promulgation of a decree re-

\* Bryant, 286.

*Emigration to California.*—According to the lists made out in the New York Herald, the number of vessels which have, up to the present moment, (March, 1849,) cleared in the ports of the United States for California, is 270, carrying, passengers and crews together, 17,341 souls. The following exhibits the number of vessels and emigrants, including crews, that have sailed by the different routes:

|                         |              |                |
|-------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| By Cape Horn, . . . .   | 198 vessels. | 12,323 souls.  |
| Chargres, . . . .       | 45 "         | 3,229 "        |
| Vera Cruz, . . . .      | 8 "          | 594 "          |
| Brazos, . . . .         | 11 "         | 765 "          |
| Corpus Christi, . . . . | 3 "          | 103 "          |
| San Juan, . . . .       | 2 "          | 118 "          |
| Tampico, . . . .        | 2 "          | 87 "           |
| Lavaca, . . . .         | 1 "          | 122 "          |
|                         | <hr/> 270 "  | <hr/> 17,341 " |

This estimate, from the general accuracy of this paper, is probably nearly correct as far as the emigration from the Atlantic ports; but the population has been immensely increased up to this time by the thousands who have gone to California from this country by the overland routes, from the western coast of South America, from Mexico, the Pacific Islands and Europe.

quiring all Americans to leave the country. No immediate attempt was made to enforce this decree, but it excited the determined hostility of those against whom it was directed, and they at once prepared to resist its execution. Soon after its promulgation, a detachment of soldiers was sent by General Castro to remove some government horses from the mission at San Raphael to his head-quarters at Santa Clara. They were obliged, in the performance of this duty, to cross the Rio Sacramento at Nueva Helvetia, in the neighborhood of which a large American population had concentrated. Intelligence of their approach was given to the settlers by an Indian, and also to Capt. Frémont who was at that time in the valley; and a Mr. Knight who had encountered them, communicated the important information, that these horses had been sent for to mount a battalion of two hundred men, to be used by General Castro in the expulsion of the Americans from the valley. It was also stated that Castro intended to fortify the Bear River Pass, and shut out emigration from the United States.

A meeting of the Americans was at once held, and a volunteer party started after the Californians, took the horses from them, and sent word to Castro by the soldiers that "if he wanted his horses he must come and get them." The movement, thus commenced, was prosecuted in the manner peculiar to the parties. The Mexicans fulminated ridiculous proclamations; the Americans came off victorious in all the encounters which occurred; had taken Sonoma, driven Castro out of the Northern Valley, in seventeen days after the issue of his order, and were seriously meditating the policy of raising the banner of the "Bear and Star," and planting a Republic on the shores of the Pacific.\*

The opportune appearance of the United States as an actor in the affairs of California prevented the consummation of this scheme. On the 2d of July, 1846, Commodore Sloat, in the frigate *Savannah*, entered the harbor of Monterey, and in view of the difficulties between Mexico and the United States, determined to take possession of the place. The American flag was raised by him at this point on the 7th instant, and soon after at San Francisco and Sonoma. On the 15th, Commodore Stockton arrived at Monterey, and on the 17th of the following month issued a proclamation, declaring California to be in the full and peaceable possession of the United States. In September a revolution broke out, and some hard fighting became necessary to the retention of the territory thus easily acquired; and the Americans, under the commands respectively

\* Bryant, 286. Hughes's California, 81.

of Commodore Stockton, General Kearney, and Captain Frémont, convinced their opponents that it was vain to hope the forcible expulsion of the intruders who had raised the flag of the United States upon the soil of California. The revolution of Flores was effectually crushed, and Commodore Stockton (General Kearney protesting against his power to do so) appointed Lieut. Col. Frémont Governor of California. Commodore Stockton was soon afterward superseded by Commodore Shubrick, and in March, 1847, General Kearney assumed the reins of government. In May, he returned to the United States, leaving Colonel Mason, who had been sent out for that purpose, Acting-Governor of California.\*

The space within which I am obliged to confine my paper, makes it necessary to sketch rapidly these important events. I have said nothing of the premature occupation of Monterey by Commodore Jones in 1842, only glanced at the revolution headed by General Flores, and given no extended view of the movement of the American settlers under Mr. Ide, which was called the "Bear Revolution."† Among other matters thus hastily alluded to, is the unfortunate collision between General Kearney and Commodore Stockton. It is greatly to be regretted that this difficulty should have occurred, especially as its result has been to deprive the Government, for the present at least, of the invaluable services of Lieutenant Colonel Frémont, one of the boldest and most scientific explorers that has ever served the Republic. To his untiring energy, indomitable perseverance, extended research and graphic pen we are indebted for the most reliable and interesting details which have been furnished in connection with our far western possessions; and it is a matter of national moment that such a man should speedily be restored to the position which his high qualities so well fit him to adorn.

After the expulsion of the last Mexican Governor, General Micheltorena, and before the occupation of the country by the American forces, a Junta was convened at Monterey, and the question of a foreign

\* \* Bryant, 287 to 405. Documents accompanying the President's message of December, 1848, pp. 1037 to 1054.

† The corps of volunteers consisting of American emigrants to California, commanded by Mr. Ide and Captain Grigsby, raised the flag of the "Bear and Star" in the settlements on the Sacramento, and held that part of the province in quiet possession. Their intention was to establish an independent government in case the United States forces did not co-operate in wresting the country from the hands of the Mexicans. These were styled the Bear Men. The number of grizzly bears in the country and the single star of the Texan flag, probably suggested the device of their own banner.—*Hughes's California*, p. 82

alliance argued with great earnestness, and no inconsiderable ability. The most prominent members of this body were General José Castro, Don Pio Pico, and Don Mariana Gaudalupe Vallejo. The two first were earnest in their advocacy of immediate annexation to France or England, and Vallejo was in favor of a union with the United States. I quote the speeches of Señors Pico and Vallejo, because they show what were the feelings of the better informed Californians at this crisis, and allude, in forcible language, to the resources of their country and the characteristic results of Mexican domination.\*

“Excellent Sirs!” argued Pio Pico, “to what a deplorable condition is our country reduced! Mexico, professing to be our mother and our protectress, has given us neither arms, nor money, nor the material of war for our defence. She is not likely to do any thing in our behalf, although she is quite willing to afflict us with her extortionate minions, who come hither in the guise of soldiers and civil officers, to harrass and oppress our people. We possess a glorious country, capable of attaining a physical and moral greatness corresponding with the grandeur and beauty which an Almighty hand has stamped upon the face of our beloved California. But although nature has been prodigal, it cannot be denied that we are not in a position to avail ourselves of her bounty. Our population is not large, and it is sparsely scattered over valley and mountain, covering an immense era of virgin soil, destitute of roads, and traversed with difficulty; hence it is hardly possible to collect an army of any considerable force. Our people are poor, as well as few, and cannot well govern themselves and maintain a decent show of sovereign power. Although we live in the midst of plenty, we lay up nothing; but, tilling the earth in an imperfect manner, all our time is required to provide proper subsistence for ourselves and our families. Thus circumstanced, we find ourselves suddenly threatened by hordes of Yankee emigrants, who have already begun to flock into our country, and whose progress we cannot arrest. Already have the wagons of that perfidious people scaled the almost inaccessible summits of the Sierra Nevada, crossed the entire continent, and penetrated the fruitful valley of the Sacramento. What that astonishing people will next undertake, I cannot say; but in whatever enterprise they embark they will be sure to prove successful. Already are these adventurous land-voyagers

\* Mr. Revere, from whose work these speeches are taken, intimates that the remarks attributed to Pio Pico, may have been in fact delivered by Señor Antonio Varillo, who was a member prominent in the Junta. See Revere, pp. 24 to 30.

spreading themselves far and wide over a country which seems suited to their tastes. They are cultivating farms, establishing vineyards, erecting mills, sawing up lumber, building workshops, and doing a thousand other things which seem natural to them, but which Californians neglect or despise. What then are we to do? Shall we remain supine, while these daring strangers are overrunning our fertile plains, and gradually outnumbering and displacing us? Shall these incursions go on unchecked, until we shall become strangers in our own land? We cannot successfully oppose them by our own unaided power, and the swelling tide of emigration renders the odds against us more formidable every day. We cannot stand alone against them, nor can we creditably maintain our independence even against Mexico; but there is something which we can do which will elevate our country, strengthen her at all points, and yet enable us to preserve our identity and remain masters of our own soil. Perhaps what I am about to suggest may seem to some, faint-hearted and dishonorable. \* \* \*

"There are two great powers in Europe which seem destined to divide between them the unappropriated countries of the world. They have large fleets and armies not unpracticed in the art of war. Is it not better to connect ourselves with one of these powerful nations, than to struggle on without hope, as we are doing now? Is it not better that one of them should be invited to send a fleet and an army, to defend and protect California, rather than we should fall an easy prey to the lawless adventurers who are overrunning our beautiful country? I pronounce for annexation to France or England, and the people of California will never regret having taken my advice. They will no longer be subjected to the trouble and grievous expense of governing themselves; and their beef and their grain, which they produce in such abundance, would find a ready market among the new comers. But I hear some one say, "No monarchy!" But is not monarchy better than anarchy? Is not existence in some shape, better than annihilation? No monarchy! and what is there so terrible in a monarchy? Have we not all lived under a monarchy far more despotic than that of France, or England, and were not our people happy under it? Have not the leading men among our agriculturists been bred beneath the royal rule of Spain, and have they been happier since the mock republic of Mexico has supplied its place? Nay, does not every man abhor the miserable abortion christened the Republic of Mexico, and look back with regret to the golden days of the Spanish monarchy? Let us restore

that glorious era. Then may our people go quietly to their ranchos, and live there as of yore, leading a merry and thoughtless life, untroubled by politics or cares of State, sure of what is their own, and safe from the incursions of the Yankees, who would soon be forced to retreat into their own country."

Señor Vallejo, a native Californian, of high position and character, replied in substance as follows :

"I cannot, gentlemen, coincide in opinion with the military and civil functionaries who have advocated the cession of our country to France or England. It is most true that to rely any longer upon Mexico to govern and defend us, would be idle and absurd. To this extent I fully agree with my distinguished colleagues. It is also true that we possess a noble country, every way calculated, from position and resources, to become great and powerful. For that very reason I would not have her a mere dependency upon a foreign monarchy, naturally alien, or at least indifferent to our interests and our welfare. \* \* \*

"Even could we tolerate the idea of dependence, ought we to go to distant Europe for a master? What possible sympathy could exist between us and a nation separated from us by two vast oceans? But waiving this insuperable objection, how could we endure to come under the dominion of a monarchy?—for although others speak lightly of a form of government, as a freeman, I cannot do so. We are republicans—badly governed and badly situated as we are—still we are all, in sentiment, republicans. So far as we are governed at all, we at least profess to be self-governed. Who then, that possesses true patriotism will consent to subject himself and his children to the caprices of a foreign king and his official minions? But it is asked, If we do not throw ourselves upon the protection of France or England, what *shall* we do? I do not come here to support the existing order of things, but I come prepared to propose instant and effective action to extricate our country from her present forlorn condition. My opinion is made up that we must persevere in throwing off the galling yoke of Mexico, and proclaim our independence of her forever. We have endured her official cormorants and her villainous soldiery until we can endure no longer. All will probably agree with me that we ought at once to rid ourselves of what may remain of Mexican domination. But some profess to doubt our ability to maintain our position. To my mind, there comes no doubt. Look at Texas, and see how long she withstood the power of united Mexico. The resources of Texas were not to be

compared with ours, and she was much nearer to her enemy than we are. Our position is so remote, either by land or sea, that we are in no danger from a Mexican invasion. Why then, should we hesitate, still to assert our independence? We have indeed taken the first step, by electing our own governor, but another remains to be taken. I will mention it plain and distinctly: it is annexation to the United States. In contemplating this consummation of our destiny, I feel nothing but pleasure, and I ask you to share it. Discard old prejudices, disregard old customs, and prepare for the glorious change which awaits our country. Why should we shrink from incorporating ourselves with the happiest and freest nation in the world, destined soon to be the most wealthy and powerful? Why should we go abroad for protection when this great nation is our adjoining neighbor? When we join our fortunes to hers, we shall not become subjects, but fellow-citizens, possessing all the rights of the people of the United States, and choosing our own federal and local rulers. We shall have a stable government and just laws. California will grow strong and flourish, and her people will be prosperous, happy and free. Look not, therefore, with jealousy upon the hardy pioneers who scale our mountains and cultivate our unoccupied plains; but rather welcome them as brothers, who come to share with us a common destiny."

These sound views of Señor Vallejo were not adopted by the Junta, but the stand he took, led to its sudden adjournment; and the arrival soon afterward of the American squadron, settled the question of French or English annexation.

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At the close of the war with Mexico, the territory of Alta California was ceded to the United States by the treaty of Gaudalupe Hidalgo, which was ratified in May 1848. The magnificent domain thus formally transferred to us, lies between the parallels of  $32^{\circ} 50'$  and  $42^{\circ}$  north latitude, and  $106^{\circ}$  and  $124^{\circ}$  west longitude. The western coast for nine hundred and seventy miles is washed by the Pacific ocean. The majestic range of the Sierra Madre forms its eastern boundary. On the south runs the river Gila; and western Missouri, and the Oregon Territory, shut it in on the north. It has an area of four hundred and forty-eight thousand six hundred and ninety-one square miles, or two hundred and eighty-seven million one hundred and sixty-two thousand

two hundred and forty acres of land. In other words, our territory of Upper California contains twelve hundred and two square miles more than the States of Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Iowa and Wisconsin, all combined.\*

In continuing the description of this empire, the natural configuration of which is proportionate to its vast extent, it becomes necessary to treat of it in two divisions. Between the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada, lies an immense tract only partially explored, which has received the name of the Great Basin. It is some five hundred miles in diameter every way, and between four and five thousand feet above the level of the sea. Shut in upon all sides by mountains, and having a perfect system of lakes and rivers entirely unconnected with the ocean, its general character is that of desert but with great exceptions, there being many parts of it very fit for the residence of a civilized people.† Its interior mountains, abrupt and wooded, rise suddenly from a base of ten or twenty miles, to an elevation of seven to ten thousand feet above the level of the sea. In its bosom are a great number of lakes. The most important yet discovered are the Great Salt Lake, and the Utah Lake. The first of these is about seventy miles in length, and is remarkable for its saline qualities. The rocky shores of its islands are whitened by the spray which deposits salt upon every thing it touches. The shallow arms of the lake during the dry season, under a slight covering of water, present beds of salt extending for miles, and

\* Accompanying the President's Message of December, 1848, is a map shewing the estimated surface of the Territories north and west of the organized States, and the portions of Territories thereof, north and south of the parallel of 39° 30' north latitude; with a table exhibiting the areas of the States and Territories in square miles and acres. In the table of Territory, exclusive of old Territory east of the Rocky Mountains, the area of California is estimated at four hundred and forty-eight thousand six hundred and ninety-one square miles; or two hundred and eighty-seven million one hundred and sixty-two thousand two hundred and forty acres. The whole area of the States enumerated in the text, is stated to be four hundred and forty-seven thousand four hundred and eighty-nine square miles, which leaves a surplus in favor of California of twelve hundred and two square miles. See President's Message, pp. 8 and 72 and map. Bryant, 275. See also California and Oregon, by Com. Wilkes, p. 19.

† I quote freely from Col. Frémont's Memoir in this description of the Great Basin; and avail myself throughout my paper of his graphic and reliable publication. The bold and scientific manner in which he conducts his explorations, and the forcible and elegant style in which he records the results of them, are equally remarkable.

resembling softened ice, in which the horses sink to the fetlock. No fish or animal life of any kind, is found in its waters, and the larvæ upon the shores belong wholly to winged insects. The Utah is a fresh water lake, about thirty-five miles in length, nearly five thousand feet above the level of the sea, and fed by numerous streams from the neighboring mountains. Upon the western side of the Basin is the Pyramid Lake, also thirty-five miles in length, shut in by mountains and remarkable for its depth and clearness. To the southward along the base of the Sierra Nevada, is a long range of lakes, some of which are of considerable size.

The most important river of the Basin is Humboldt River, laid down upon some maps as Mary's or Ogden River. It rises in the mountains west of the Great Salt Lake, and runs westwardly along the northern side of the Basin, towards the Sierra Nevada. Bordered with a rich alluvial valley of its own creation, covered with beautiful grasses, and fringed with willow and cotton wood trees,—it sweeps through an otherwise sterile plain for three hundred miles without any affluents, until its waters, lessened by evaporation and absorption, lose themselves in a marshy lake within fifty miles of the Sierra Nevada. This river is likely to become very important in connection with the development of our commerce with the Pacific. It rises near the Great Salt Lake, in the vicinity of which is the Mormon settlement, daily growing in importance. It runs nearly east and west, in the direct line of travel to Oregon and California, and furnishes a level and unobstructed road, well supplied with wood and water, for three hundred miles. Its termination is opposite to the Pass of the Salmon Trout River, which at an elevation of less than three thousand six hundred feet above the level of the Basin, opens directly into the rich valley of the Sacramento, only forty miles north of Nueva Helvetia. The other principal rivers of the Basin are the Bear, Utah, Nicollett, and Salmon Trout Rivers, which are from one to two hundred miles in length. The Great Basin has not been sufficiently explored to justify any theory of climate, applicable to it in its whole extent. High above the sea, surrounded by snow-capped mountains, swept by the winds from the Pacific, which after depositing their moisture upon the slopes of the Sierra, blow piercing and cold over its plains; and with an immense evaporation constantly going on from its peculiar system of lakes, rivers and marshes, its dominant characteristics are cold and moisture. Notwithstanding these traits of climate, and its general desert character,

Frémont believes that it may be made the home of civilized men, who will find in its arable parts, sufficient resources of subsistence and comfort.

West of the Sierra Nevada, and lying between it and the Pacific, is the division of California with which we are most familiar, and to which the attention of the civilized world has lately been so forcibly attracted. The contrast which it presents to the region just described is very striking. The westward traveller, wearied with the sterility of the Great Basin, winds up some Pass, piercing the wall of separation, and from the heights of the Sierra Nevada looks down upon a scene of blended magnificence and beauty. The slopes of the mountain range, with a breadth of forty to seventy miles, and five hundred miles in length; heavily wooded with oak, pine, cypress and cedar; watered by innumerable streams, and opening into broad glens, stretch down into the valley with gradual and easy descent. At the base of the Sierra spread the fertile and picturesque valleys of the Sacramento and San Joaquin, watered by the confluent rivers which give them name, and rendered beautiful by diversified and luxuriant vegetation. Beyond these to the west, rises a mountain range two thousand feet in elevation, covered with lofty cypress, and sheltering between its ridges and the lower hills upon the coast, the lovely valley of San Juan, which is the garden spot of California. To the north-west, distinctly seen at a distance of one hundred and forty miles, the Shastle Peak rises fourteen thousand feet above the level of the sea. In the foreground is Monte Diavolo, beyond which the broad bay of San Francisco opens by a narrow pass into the Pacific.

One of the most important features of this division of California, is the Bay of San Francisco. It was discovered about 1768 by a party of Franciscan monks, who bestowed upon it the name of their patron saint. All writers unite in pronouncing it one of most splendid harbors in the world. It is completely land-locked, and sufficiently capacious to meet the requirements of the most extended commerce. Approaching from the sea, the coast presents a bold outline. On the south the bordering mountains come down in a narrow range of hills, against which the sea breaks heavily. On the northern side the ridge presents a bold promontory, rising in a few miles to a height of three thousand feet. Between these two points, with abrupt and lofty cliffs upon each side, is a narrow strait about one mile wide and five in length, with a depth of water in mid-channel of forty to forty-five fathoms, which forms the entrance into the bay. This is called *Chrysopolæ*, or the Golden Gate.

Beyond this gate the Bay of San Francisco opens to the right and left, extending in each direction about thirty-five miles, having a total length of more than seventy miles, and an inland coast of two hundred and seventy-five in extent. Within, the view presented is of an interior lake of deep water lying between parallel ranges of mountains. Islands, some of them mere masses of rock, and others covered with grasses, and three to eight hundred feet in height, give its surface a picturesque appearance. It is divided, by projecting points and straits, into three separate bays. At its northern extremity is Whaler's Harbor, which communicates by a strait two miles in length, with the Bay of San Pablo, a circular basin ten miles in diameter; and this again at its north-eastern extremity by another strait of greater length connects with Suissun Bay, which is of nearly equal magnitude and form as that of San Pablo. Into Suissun Bay the confluent waters of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers empty. By these rivers a direct communication is opened with the productive valleys which bear their names. The main Bay of San Francisco lies to the southward.\*

The town of San Francisco, or Yerba Buena, is situated on the west side of the bay, and on the northern point of the Peninsula which lies between the southern portion of the bay and the Pacific ocean. It is about four miles from the narrows or straits by which the bay is entered from the sea. The immediate site of the present town is an indentation or cove in the western shore of the bay, directly in front of which, and at a distance of about two miles, lies a large Island called Yerba Buena. From the water's edge the land rises gradually for more than half a mile, to the west and south-west, until it terminates in a range of hills five hundred feet in height at the back of the town. To the north of the town is an immense bluff (or rather three in one) more than five hundred feet high, which comes down to the water's edge, with precipitous sides of from twenty to one hundred feet in height. In front of this bluff is the best anchorage ground, the bottom being good and the high lands protecting vessels from the force of the westerly winds. Between this bluff and the above mentioned hill, there is a small and nearly level valley which connects with a smaller cove about a mile nearer the ocean. The bluff forms the north-western boundary of the

\* Bryant, 323, 439. Forbes, 166. Life in Cal. 60, 215. Thornton's Oregon and California, 67, 68, 69. Frémont, 32. There are two other harbors upon the coast, Monterey and San Diego. San Diego is much less capacious than San Francisco, but is large enough to accommodate a considerable trade; and is esteemed a good and secure harbor. Monterey is an open roadstead, but is protected from the prevalent winds, and has heretofore been the chief resort of foreign shipping.—Forbes, 167.

cove, whilst the eastern boundary is another bluff, called the Rincon, near fifty feet in height. To the south and south-west of this last mentioned point there is a succession of low sand hills, covered with a dense growth of stunted trees peculiar to the country.\*

In the development of California San Francisco will doubtless become a large and important city. Its position immediately upon the bay, will make it the port of the country. The direct communication with the interior valley, already open by the Carquinez Straits and the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers, furnishes a natural channel, through which supplies will flow into it. The surface of the country will admit of the construction at a moderate cost of rail roads into the interior, and an immense commerce will find in it a point of concentration. The increase of population, the presence of capital and the facilities offered for its profitable investment in agriculture and trade, combined with the attractions of a more uniform and delicious climate, will soon direct attention to other points which present many advantages as the sites of future cities. One of these is at the head of the Suissun Bay, at the debouchment of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers; another is at or near the settlement of Captain Sutter, called Nueva Helvetia, and a third and most desirable location will be found in the rich valley south of San Francisco, in the vicinity of the Pueblo of San José.†

The most important rivers of Maritime California are the Sacramento and San Joaquin.‡ The San Joaquin rises in the Sierra Nevada, near the southern extremity of the valley. It is fed by many larger tributaries from the Sierra, and empties into the Bay of San Francisco after a course of about two hundred miles. It is navigable in some seasons during eight months of the year, and for a greater part of its length.¶ The

\*Thornton's Oregon and California, p. 72. The "California Star" of April 1, 1848, gives eight hundred as the white population of the town of San Francisco. The population, in February, 1849, was nearly 6,000.

† Since this paragraph was written, a friend has placed in my hands a California newspaper, in which I find an account of a city already laid out at the Straits of Carquinez. It is called Benecia city. These straits unite the bays of Suissun and San Pablo.

‡ Bryant, p. 276. Frémont, p. 21. There are one or more lakes of considerable size in the southern part of the valley, with which this river connects at high water. They are variously named and described as the Tulare Lake, Buena Vista, Chintache, and Tula Lake.—Wilkes and Dr. Marsh speak of two lakes—Frémont of the Tulare Lakes. Bryant, 276. Wilkes, 29. Frémont, 15, 18, 21.

¶ The largest river in Upper California is the Colorado, or Red River, which, after a course of a thousand miles, empties into the Gulf of California about 32° north. It rises in and flows through a region very little known. Green, Grand, Sevier and Virgin Rivers are its chief known tributaries. The Gila is its main branch, and pours into it near its mouth.

chief tributaries of the San Joaquin are the Reyes, the Stanislaus, the Javalones, the Merced, and the Cosumnes Rivers. The Sacramento River rises above latitude  $42^{\circ}$  north, and runs from north to south, nearly parallel with the coast of the Pacific until it empties, after a course of about two hundred miles, into the Bay of San Francisco, in latitude  $38\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  north. It runs through an inclined alluvial prairie, and is described by all writers as a deep, broad and beautiful stream. This river is destined to become a very important feature in the development of the country. It communicates directly with the bay, flows through a very fertile region, and is already navigable for vessels of considerable draught, as high up as the settlements at Nueva Helvetia. Its principal tributaries are the Rio de los Americanos and the Rio de las Plumas.\*

The belt of country lying between the Sierra Nevada and the sea, is called Maritime California. It extends north and south, ten degrees of latitude, from the Peninsula to Oregon. Its average breadth is from one hundred and fifty to two hundred miles; and its superficial area is one hundred thousand square miles, or sixty-four million acres, which is equal to the area in square miles of the States of New York, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts combined.†

The valley of the Sacramento, although discriminated by the names of the two principal rivers, is a single geographical formation, about five hundred miles in length, and sixty broad, lying at the western base of the Sierra and the coast range of mountains, and stretching across the head of the Bay of San Francisco, with which it is connected by a delta of twenty-five miles.‡ Opposite the head of the Bay of San Francisco and at the point where the Sacramento and San Joaquin River debouche, occurs the only break or gap in the range of mountains which forms the western boundary of the great valley, and (according to Frémont's map,) run from the Oregon line to the 34th parallel, at an average elevation of two thousand feet.¶ The portion of the valley which lies south-east of this point is called the valley of the San Joaquin. It is about three hundred miles long, and sixty broad, and presents a variety of soil, from dry and unproductive to well watered and luxuriantly fer-

\* Bryant, 271, 344. Wilkes, 27. Mr. Revere, p. 69, says that it is navigable for steamboats at all seasons, as high as the Buttes, an isolated mountain ridge a little above the 39th parallel. Revere, 69. Frémont's Memoir, 27.

† See the table of estimated areas of Territories and States, accompanying the President's Message of December 5, 1848. Frémont's Memoir, p. 13.

‡ Frémont's Memoir, p. 15.

¶ See Revere, p. 52, for a theory of the volcanic origin of this gap, stated upon the authority of General Vallejo.

tile. Upon the eastern side, it is intersected by numerous streams from the Sierra which form large and beautiful bottoms of rich land, wooded principally with white oak in open groves of trees, often six feet in diameter and sixty to eighty high. The larger streams only pass entirely across the valley.\* The low, or foot hills, of the Sierra Nevada, which limit the valley, make a woodland country, well watered and diversified. This section of the valley is well adapted to the cultivation of the grape, and will probably become the principal vine growing region of California. The rolling surface of the hills presents many sunny exposures, sheltered from the winds, and having a soil and climate highly favorable to this purpose. The vine thrives in California in an extraordinary manner. It is already cultivated to a considerable extent, and the wine produced is of very excellent quality. Intelligent cultivation alone seems needed to make both wine and brandy in quantities sufficient both for consumption and exportation.† The uplands bordering the valleys of the larger streams are wooded with evergreen oaks, and the intervening plains are timbered with the same tree, among prairie and open land. The surface is level, plain and undulating or rolling ground. The soil is rich, and admirably adapted to the cultivation of wheat, which yields enormous crops. The grasses are various and luxuriant; and oats grow wild, covering large tracts with a dense growth frequently as high as the head of a man mounted upon horseback.

Around the southern arm of the Bay of San Francisco, a low alluvial bottom land, with occasional woods of oak, borders the western foot of the mountain ranges, terminating on a breadth of thirty miles in the valley of San José. This valley, in connection with that of San Juan, forms a continuous plain fifty-five miles in length, and one mile to twenty in breadth, opening into smaller valleys among the hills. Shut in between the coast range and the lower hills upon the sea—with a soil of singular fertility, a pure and dry atmosphere, and a soft and delicious climate;—this valley, opening directly upon the Bay of San Francisco, appears to unite more inducements to settlement than any other portion of California. It is wooded with majestic trees, covered with the richest grasses, brilliant with an endless variety of wild flowers, produces in profusion the fruits of the temperate and tropical zones, and breaks into secluded glens and wild recesses among the hills. All the tourists speak of it as a most attractive and beautiful spot.‡

\* Frémont's Memoir, pp. 15, 16.

† Frémont's Memoir, 16. Bryant, 277, 412. Forbes, 264. Revere, 282.

‡ Frémont's Memoir, 33, 34. Bryant, 316.

North of the Bay of San Francisco, between the Sacramento valley and the coast, the country is cut into mountain ridges and rolling hills, with many fertile and watered valleys. In the interior it is generally well wooded with oak; and, immediately along the coast, it presents open prairie land lying among heavily timbered forests, and frequently covered for miles with a dense growth of wild oats. To the eastward of this tract, and intermediate between the coast range and the Sierra Nevada, stretches from the head of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers to the mountains upon the forty-first parallel, that division of the country which is called the valley of the Sacramento. It is about two hundred miles long and sixty wide, watered by the Rio Sacramento and its affluents. It presents a diversity of heavily wooded plateaux, rich prairie land, fertile slopes, alluvial bottoms and strips of yellow gravelly soil. Many parts of it are well adapted to grazing, and its general character fits it in an eminent degree for the cultivation of wheat.\*

Upon the forty-first parallel, in a fork of the Sierra Nevada, is a tract of high table land, about one hundred miles in length, surrounded on all sides by mountains, which is called by Frémont the Upper Valley of the Sacramento. It is heavily timbered, and its climate and productions are greatly modified by its altitude and more northern position. The Sacramento River which rises in the mountains at its northern extremity, reaches the lower valley through a *cañon* on the line of Shastle Peak, falling two thousand feet in twenty miles.†

The climate of California, as a necessary result of the configuration and extent of the country, presents marked contrasts in the different divisions which have been described. With reference to the whole country, the year may be divided into the wet season and the dry. The wet season begins in November, and terminates in April. During this period the rain does not fall continuously, and frequent intervals of clear and beautiful weather occur for many days in succession. Rain sometimes falls without intermission for eight or ten days, followed by spells of sunshine; and frequently the weather is fine until the afternoon, when the clouds gather. The rain during this season is not continuously steady and violent, but warm and often drizzling. Usually from May until November no rain falls. There are exceptions, however, for rain sometimes descends in August. Apart from the mere physical discomfort, the sense of which is soon lost, the wet season is healthy and delightful, and during its continuance the country wears its most beau-

\* Frémont's Memoir, 25.

† Frémont's Memoir, 25, 26, and accompanying map.

tiful aspect. With the first rains in November, the grass, clover and wild oats spring up spontaneously; the trees are clothed with fresh foliage, the flowers display their rich colors, the comparatively arid soil is covered with diversified vegetation, and by Christmas the land in its broad extent is green and beautiful. Upon the coast and the shore of the bay, the climate is cooler and less agreeable than in the interior. This is owing to the north-west winds which frequently bring with them dense fogs which are cold relatively to the mean temperature. These fogs, however, are not of that raw and piercing kind that affect the constitution. They bear no seeds of disease. These characteristics of climate are perhaps more marked at San Francisco than at any other point, and the experience of nearly a century affords conclusive evidence that they do not injuriously affect health. It is seldom cold enough in the settled portions of California to congeal water. Snow rarely falls in the valleys, and the thermometer seldom sinks below  $50^{\circ}$  or rises above  $80^{\circ}$ .\* In the great valley bordering upon the lower slopes of the Sierra, the climate is peculiarly de-

\* Bryant, 273, 326, 385 to 394, 451. Forbes, 163, 170, 312. Hughes's California, 32. Frémont's Memoir, 35, 36, 40, 43. President's Message, Dec. 1848, p. 46.

The past winter has been one of almost unprecedented severity. Snow has fallen to considerable depth, and ice has been formed in the vicinity of Captain Sutter's Fort, two or three inches in thickness. No such weather has been known in California since the winter of 1823-4, which also formed an exception to the general climate.

Some idea of the climate of California may be found by the following meteorological items derived by the N. Y. Herald tables of the weather and thermometer at Monterey, kept by Talbot H. Greene, Esq., a merchant, at Monterey, during the space of a year, viz: from March, 1845, to February, 1846.

In March, 1845, the thermometer averaged 65 at noon. There was no rain; the sky generally clear.

In April, same degree of heat; five rainy days, four foggy, the others clear.

In May, the thermometer at noon never rose higher than 64, and never fell lower than 58; weather clear.

In June, the highest noonday heat was 73; the lowest 60; weather clear.

In July, the highest heat at noon, 74; lowest 60; clear skies.

In August, greatest heat at noon, 72; lowest 63; clear skies.

In September, greatest heat at noon, 73; lowest 61; clear skies, occasional fogs at eight in the morning; rain once only.

In October, greatest heat at noon, 70; lowest 59; fogs in the morning, days clear; rain three times within the month—a little rain in the night on two occasions.

In November, greatest heat, 76; lowest 60; weather generally clear; rains in the night occasionally.

In December, greatest heat, 66; lowest 57; clear weather; rain on four different nights this month.

In January, 1846, greatest heat, 62; lowest 48; more rain this month than the former months.

In February, 1846, average heat at noon, 62; lowest 50; clear skies; rain on three different nights.

lightful. There are no prevailing diseases in the country, and the extremes of heat in the summer are checked by sea breezes during the day, and by light airs from the Sierra during the night. The climate generally resembles that of Italy, and its characteristics are salubrity and a regulated mildness.\*

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Having thus given a general view of the history and geographical features of California, I proceed to consider the resources of the country with a view to establish the hypothesis of its future national greatness. Prominent among these resources is the immense deposit of gold. "The indications of its presence," says Senator Benton, "extend over an area of more than two thousand miles. They are in New Mexico—on the waters of the Middle Colorado—on the mountains both beyond and on this side of the Sierra Nevada. Professor Dana, who was geologist to Captain Wilkes's exploring expedition, and who examined the country between the coast range and the Cascade range of mountains, found the gold-bearing rocks, as geologists call them, on the Umpqua, the Shastli, and the Tlamath rivers, and at the head of the Sacramento valley. He did not visit the Sierra Nevada, but said there was gold yet to be discovered in the Sacramento valley. It has been discovered, and no one can tell where it is to end. The Sierra Nevada is six hundred miles long, ten or twelve thousand feet high, and has a slope of from forty to seventy miles; and all this seems to be an auriferous region. South of the Sierra Nevada are prolongations of the same chain and of the same character, and known to possess gold. The Ural mountains, now yielding so much gold to Russia, are but twelve hundred miles long and five or six thousand feet high: the mountain chains in New Mexico and California which produce gold are near twice as long and twice as high as the Ural mountains." Silver also abounds in California, and several mines of great richness have recently been opened. Cinnebar, platinum, lead, iron, copper and sulphur all exist apparently in large quantities.†

This wonderful mineral wealth will no doubt, at first, produce much licentiousness and difficulty. It is, however, of vast importance collaterally considered. It matters little upon what grand scale nature may have bestowed upon a country the advantages of physical configuration and geographical position; *development* must precede greatness, and to development certain elements and impulses are absolutely essen-

\* Frémont, 14, 43.

† Bryant, 451. President's Message, Dec. 5, 1848, pp. 10, 63. Wilkes, 37. "California Star," April 1, 1848. Speech of Senator Benton, January 15, 1849.

tial. The most indispensable of these is population. Population having been attracted, inducements to its permanence, activity and increase must present themselves. These are the supply of the necessary food, the existence of the essentials of physical comfort, the opportunities of acquiring wealth; and, in proportion to the extent to which these inducements exist in a given region, population will flow into it. The moral force of population,—its ability to work out great results,—must be deduced from the original character of the emigrating people, and the nature and extent of the advantages presented. Fertility of soil alone has in some cases induced emigration, and agriculture has founded states. Geographical position has attracted it, and commerce has built up nations. The presence of the precious metals has secured it, and mineral wealth has bought development. In the case of some states these elements are found combined. Brazil, for example, has fertile soil, mineral wealth, and commercial advantages; but the influences of climate, the character of the population and political institutions, check the full development of natural resources. Mexico also possesses the precious metals in connection with a productive soil and ports upon two oceans, but similar causes have there operated with like results. Never before, however, in the history of the world, have we found a country presenting in a higher degree than California, the combined inducements, of advantageous commercial position, fertility of soil, and mineral wealth. The climate of California is also highly favorable to development. Let us enquire into the character of the people who are to control these elements of greatness.

The emigration now pouring into the country is of a mixed character. From the United States, from England, Germany, France, Mexico, South America and the Islands of the Pacific,—the World is contributing to people it; and it is fitting the world should, for its greatness will be cosmopolitan. Comparatively, however, this can occur only to a limited extent, and will exert no influence, for it is undeniable that to the people of the United States are committed the destinies of California. What are the characteristic traits of this people?—Vigor of intellect,—quickness of perception,—keenness of appreciation,—energy of action,—untiring industry,—indomitable perseverance,—physical strength,—*the necessity of progress*,—not as a means, but as a natural law, imperative upon the individual man, and the aggregate community. These people also take with them the habit of freedom, and the forms, the energies and the advantages of republican institutions.

When population is once secured, it becomes necessary to ascertain

how far the country is able to support it, for very much in proportion that a State is self-sustained, will it reach solid greatness. In the case of California it is wholly impossible to state this exactly, but we have abundant data to justify an approximate estimate sufficiently correct for the purposes of this Paper. It has already been shewn that Maritime California, the only portion of the country to which we will look in this estimate of supplies; is about one hundred thousand square miles in extent, which is equal to a superficial area of sixty-four million acres.\* This belt of country is intersected by two mountain ranges, and contains in its bosom several lakes of moderate size, five or six considerable rivers, and some marshy and sterile land. The lower slopes of these mountains, however, and the valleys opening into them, are well adapted to agriculture and grazing, and it is believed that much of the marshy districts can be made to produce rice. We will allow five-sixths of the whole area, or fifty-three million three hundred and thirty-three thousand three hundred and thirty acres, for the proportion of superficies thus occupied; so that upon a very moderate and fair estimate, we have one-sixth, or ten million six hundred and sixty-six thousand six hundred and sixty-six acres of cultivable land.

All the authorities agree in pronouncing the country admirably adapted to the cultivation of wheat. Its latitudinal position, and the results of the existing imperfect system of agriculture, verify these statements. There would seem to be few points in the great valley where the cereal grains could not be produced abundantly, and the crops of wheat wherever it has been grown, range from fifty to eighty bushels to the acre.† This yield, however, is from a virgin soil, and it is proper to make some allowance for the exhaustion which may result from regular and continuous tillage, and we will therefore calculate only twenty bushels per acre as the average yield. We will assume that one-third of the estimated cultivable land, or three million five hundred and fifty-five thousand five hundred and fifty-five acres will produce an average of twenty bushels of wheat to the acre. This will give an annual yield of seventy-one million one hundred and eleven thousand one hundred bushels, which is equal to five bushels to each individual of an aggregate population of over fourteen millions. The cultivation of another third of this sixth, in Indian corn, yielding also an average of twenty bushels to the acre; would give five bushels of corn for each individual of this estimated population, while the potatoes, beans, peas and other

\* Frémont, 13. † Frémont, 15 to 43. Bryant, 448. Forbes, 256 to 264. Thornton, vol. ii, 86, 88. Life in Cal. 61.

vegetables and fruits, raised upon the remaining third, would, in connection with the animal food consumed, furnish an ample allowance for the sustenance of each individual of this population for one year. In consideration of the immense margin of over fifty-three million acres left for mountain ranges and water, no deduction has been made from the yield of this one-sixth for the amount of grain necessary for seed, and the consumption of cattle, neither is any reference had, in this connection, to supplies for export. The cultivation of a small portion of the reserved five-sixths will fully supply these wants. As population increases in the country, and manufactures and commerce are developed, the results of agricultural labor will be enlarged; while the ability of the country to feed its inhabitants will be increased and facilitated by the growth of cities and the greater density of population.\* The supply of animal food in the country will be found to be immensely large. Game abounds in the woods in great variety and excellence. The rivers, lakes and bays are full of the finest fish, while the number of horned cattle can be increased to an indefinite extent. A very large part of the reserved five-sixths consists of excellent grazing and pasturage lands, and as hides, tallow and jerked beef will form important articles of export, much attention will be given to the increase of horned cattle.† The adaptation of California to the breeding of sheep, will make wool an important item of export and manufacture, and the supply of animal food from this source will be incalculably enlarged.‡

\* Say's Political Economy, 383.

† Before the secularization of the missions, the horned cattle were innumerable. When these establishments were broken up, the cattle were slaughtered in immense numbers. Thousands have also been slaughtered for their hides alone. In 1831, the number of horned cattle in the possession of individuals amounted to 500,000—of sheep, goats and pigs, 321,000—*Bryant*, 445.

‡ Forbes, 278.

The estimate in the text largely over-feeds the population, and the statement is purposely made a very moderate one. No individual could consume five bushels of wheat and five bushels of corn, together with meat and vegetables. Calculated according to the fixed principles regulating supply and consumption, the estimate would stand thus:

1-3d of the 1-6th or 3,555,555 acres in wheat, at 20 bushels to the acre, gives 71,111,100 bushels, which in the ratio of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  bushels to each individual, furnishes the requisite supply for a population of 15,802,466. The average yield of corn per acre is also understated. It would be more correct to assume 35 bushels to the acre—which, supposing another third of the sixth, or 3,555,555 acres to be cultivated in corn, would give 124,444,425 bushels, or 5 bushels of corn to each individual of an aggregate population of 24,888,885. Thus assuming that the supplies of animal and vegetable food will be sufficiently large, we provide for the wants of a population of forty millions. See Patent Office Report for 1847, pp. 107, 549.

The next question to be considered is the probable permanence of population. The great majority of the emigrants now seeking California are undoubtedly attracted by the mineral wealth of the country. A large proportion of this class are unfitted by their habits of life and want of physical strength to engage for any protracted time in the arduous occupation of mining. It is probable, moreover, that before many years elapse, the large deposits of gold will be exhausted, although the mineral will be found scattered over an immense surface of country in the form of scales and dust. This supposition is consistent with the general theory of the formation of gold, and has been the history of nearly all auriferous regions. A great number of those who have gone and are on their way to California, however, have fixed purposes of life, irrespective of the digging of gold; and but little reflection will be necessary to satisfy the intelligent man, that by a thousand channels, and as a consequence of as many causes, the gold will speedily find its way from the possession of the original digger into the lap of enterprise, shrewdness and labor. When the precious metals have once attracted population, the sooner they are exhausted the better. A very small proportion of those who engage in mining, will realise enough to satisfy their expectations or their cupidity, while it is probable that thousands will amass a very respectable capital. The country itself will present the most tempting opportunities for the profitable use of this capital, and a great proportion of it will at once be invested in agriculture, manufactures and trade. The beauty of the country, and the salubrious and delightful character of its climate, will also exert a great influence in fixing population.

The great commercial advantages which California possesses will perhaps constitute the strongest inducements to permanent settlement, while their development will form one of the most important elements of future greatness. The geographical position of the country is eminently favorable to commerce. The harbors upon the coast, and especially that of San Francisco, are well located and capacious enough to meet the requirements of the most extended trade. The country is capable of supporting the requisite population. The materials for the construction of a navy exist in great abundance.\* The ship timber upon the Upper Sacramento is represented as being of a superior quality. The mountain

Also in connection with the density of population, and its distribution to the square mile, see a very full article in the *American Review* of April, 1845, pp. 424 to 432. See also Humboldt's *Essai Politique sur le Royaume de la Nouvelle-Espagne*, 3 vol. p. 95.

\* President's Message of Dec. 5, 1848.

ranges are covered with pine trees. Hemp can be cultivated upon the numerous water-courses. Cotton may perhaps be raised in the San Joaquin Valley, or easily supplied from the United States; and iron and copper and coal have already been discovered.\* The mountain streams will supply water-power for mills and factories. The precious metals and minerals; the productions and manufactures of the country, together with supplies received in exchange from the Union, will provide articles of export; and when the spirit of commercial enterprise is prepared to avail itself of all these advantages, a vast field of exterior trade is open before it. Across the Sierra Nevada, lies this immense Republic, overflowing with natural productions, and the results of labor and art; to the north, the great Oregon Territory with its yet undeveloped wealth; to the south, Mexico and the American Continent; while the Pacific Ocean, with its whales, (the trade in which will find in California a point of concentration,) offers a short and direct route to the Islands and Empires of the east. The Ladrones and Phillipines, Borneo, Sumatra, Java, the clusters of the Indian Ocean, Japan, China, Burmah, Hindustan, with their various productions and accumulated wealth, unfold resources which are wholly inappreciable from their extent and richness.

In the development of these resources, steam will be a powerful agent of commerce. With a continuous line of rail roads connecting the two oceans, and steam-ships traversing the Pacific, California will become the recipient and highway of the Oriental trade. The rich commerce of Asia will flow through her centre. "And where has that commerce ever flowed without carrying wealth and dominion with it? Look at its ancient channels, and the cities which it raised into kingdoms, and the populations which upon its treasures became resplendent in science, learning and the arts. Tyre, Sidon, Balbec, Palmyra, Alexandria, among its ancient emporiums, attest the power of this commerce to enrich, to aggrandize, and to enlighten nations. Constantinople, in the middle ages, and in the time of the crusades, was the wonder of western Europe; and all, because she was then a thoroughfare of Asiatic commerce. Genoa and Venice, mere cities, in later time, became the match of kingdoms, and the envy of Kings, from the mere divided streams of this trade of which they became the thoroughfare. Lisbon had her great day, and Portugal her pre-eminence during the little while that the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope put her in communication

\* Forbes, 349, 350.

Immense supplies of coal exist also on Vancouver's Island, and on the main land about the upper tributaries of the Columbia River.—*California Star*, April 1, 1848.

with the east. Amsterdam, the city of a little territory rescued from the sea, and the Seven United Provinces, not equal in extent to one of our lesser States, became great in arms, in letters, in wealth and in power; and all upon the East India trade. And London, what makes her the commercial mistress of the world—what makes an island no larger than one of our first class States—the mistress of possessions in the four quarters of the Globe—a match for half of Europe—and dominant in Asia? What makes all this, or contributes most to make it, but this same Asiatic trade? In no instance has it failed to carry the nation, or the people which possessed it, to the highest pinnacle of wealth and power, and with it the highest attainments of letters, arts, and sciences.”\*

Society in California is in a transition state. Peculiar influences operate there to develop in an unusual degree the traits inseparable from incipient organization. The abundance of the precious metals will exert for some time a deleterious influence upon society. The great conservative principle however is there, and property will provide protection. Law will correct licentiousness. Already a provisional government is about to be established, and no very long time can reasonably be expected to elapse, before the social elements will become purified and settled.

The design of this Paper has been to exhibit as fully as its limits would permit, *the History and Capacities of California*. Where opinions have been expressed, they have been based upon sufficient data. Its statements have been well considered; its facts carefully collated, and its calculations made in accordance with settled principles. The subject itself is full of importance, and would reward a much more extended investigation.

The century in which we live has been crowded with great events, Development has been its characteristic. Progress has been its watchword. Science has achieved in it her brightest triumphs. The resources of nations have been multiplied. The field of human energy has been enlarged, and among the greatest of the events which will mark the epoch in the estimation of the future historian, will be the consolidation of the first Anglo-Saxon Empire upon the borders of the Pacific.

\* Senator Benton's speech in support of a national road to the Pacific, delivered February 7, 1849.



